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NEWS RELEASE

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WASHINGTON, August 31: David E. Finley, Director of the National Gallery of Art, announces that an important oil painting by the American artist, Winslow Homer (1836 - 1910), entitled Right and Left, has been given to the Gallery by the Avalon Foundation through the generosity of Mrs. Ailsa Mellon Bruce.

"Right and Left, finished in 1909, was Homer's next to last painting", Mr. Finley said. "The artist was reluctant to part with it, believing that it should be hung in a museum. Finally he consented to sell it to Mr. Randal Morgan of Philadelphia, the brother of one of his friends, in whose family the painting has remained until acquired for the National Gallery."

John Walker, Chief Curator of the National Gallery of Art, considers this one of the artist's most distinguished works. "For simplicity of conception and forcefulness of expression", he stated, "it would be difficult to find an equal. In typical fashion the artist has endowed an everyday occurrence with a nobility that goes beyond the importance of the event. There is here none of the sentiment prevalent in most of the painting of Homer's time. Rather it is a straightforward, objective dramatization of the fact. This is Homer at his best."

In his book, The Life and Works of Winslow Homer, William Downes writes of this painting, "The artist had bought a fine pair of wild ducks for his Thanksgiving dinner. He did not intend to make a painting of them, but their plumage was so handsome, he was tempted; and before he got through with them his Thanksgiving dinner was spoiled. It may be a subject of speculation how he came to show the ducks in the air, above the waves, falling, as if just mortally wounded by a hunter. He employed his usual careful methods of observation in this case. He went out, day after day, in a boat, with a man who was armed with a double-barreled shotgun, and studied the positions and movement of the birds when they were shot. He had no title for the picture. It was sent to ... a gallery in New York; a sportsman came in, caught a glimpse of the picture, and at once cried out, 'Right and left!'--admiring not so much the picture per se, as the skill of the hunter who could bring down a bird with each barrel of his double-barreled shotgun in quick succession. So the work was christened."